

Senator Doyle, Representative Taborsak, and members of the General Law Committee, I would like to thank you today for the opportunity to speak to you in strong support of House Bill 5360. Specifically I am here to speak to the importance of the tobacco product regulation section of this bill.

My name is Tanya Schweitzer and I am the project coordinator of the Drug Free Communities grant for the Milford Prevention Council (MPC). The mission of the MPC is to reduce underage drinking and substance use. These goals are achieved through community education, the support of law enforcement and the strengthening of our community collaboration. The MPC is in support of the current bill because it aligns with our mission to create a healthier community for our youth. The community members who comprise the MPC are in support of limiting access to tobacco products including but not limited rolling papers, bongs, water pipes, smoking masks and others. The current bill proposes that persons younger than 18 years of age would not be able to purchase these products from retailers; however, the MPC would ask that the language of the bill also make it illegal to give or deliver these products to youth under the age of 18 which is the equivalent to current laws for tobacco. In addition, we would also ask that the language be strengthened to make it illegal for persons under 18 to purchase or misrepresent their age to purchase tobacco paraphernalia. Since these products are marketed by local retailers for use with tobacco, the laws for purchase of these products should mirror the current laws pertaining to purchase of tobacco.

Although these products are marketed as for use with tobacco by retailers, these products are not recognized by the federal government, drug enforcement agencies or youth as for use with tobacco. The federal government defines drug paraphernalia as "equipment, products and materials of any kind which are used, intended for use, or designed for use, in planting, propagating, cultivating, growing, harvesting, manufacturing, compounding, converting, producing, processing, preparing, testing, analyzing, packaging, repackaging, storing, concealing, containing, injecting, ingesting, inhaling, or otherwise introducing into the human body a controlled substance." Bongs, water pipes and others have been identified as common types of drug paraphernalia even though these are products marketed by retailers as tobacco paraphernalia. Identifying drug paraphernalia can be challenging because products often are marketed as though they were designed for legitimate purposes.

Marijuana pipes and bongs, for example, frequently carry a misleading disclaimer indicating that they are intended to be used only with tobacco products. Recognizing drug paraphernalia often involves considering other factors such as the manner in which items are displayed for sale, descriptive materials or instructions accompanying the items, and the type of business selling the items. The appearance of drug paraphernalia varies depending upon the manufacturer and intended purpose. Increasingly, bongs, pipes, and other paraphernalia are manufactured in bright, trendy colors and bear designs such as skulls, devils, dragons, and wizards. Manufacturers attempt to normalize drug use and make their products attractive to teenagers and young adults. In Milford, as in many communities we are faced with a diminished youth perception of harm when it comes to marijuana use and as a result we have seen a steady climb in teen use of marijuana. By making these products available and visible to youth

it continues to send a message of acceptance, especially since most youth do not identify these products as for use with tobacco.

In Milford, several of our gas stations and convenience stores have large displays of bongs, water pipes, rolling papers, hookahs and other paraphernalia. Typically these displays are located next to the candy and gum right in the line of sight of most youth. There are 82 retailers in the city, all of whom have the right and capacity to carry these products. Although some have elected not to display these tobacco products, the increased availability of these products makes it more likely that youth will be able to gain access to these products. Much like cigarettes that are concealed behind store counters and most often have to be requested for by patrons, tobacco products should also be kept more discretely behind store counters and hidden from youth.

Thank you for your time and energy toward these efforts. We hope that you consider our requests to strengthen the language of the bill and we appreciate your efforts to build a safer Connecticut for our youth.

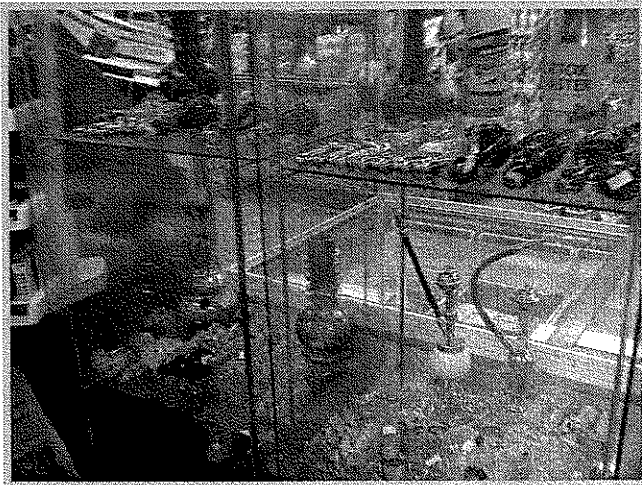
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What are drug paraphernalia?

Under federal law, the term drug paraphernalia means “any equipment, product or material of any kind which is primarily intended or designed for use in manufacturing, compounding, converting, concealing, producing, processing, preparing, injecting, ingesting, inhaling, or otherwise introducing into the human body a controlled substance.” This includes but is not limited to items such as bongs, roach clips, miniature spoons, scales, baggies and various types of pipes.

What do drug paraphernalia look like?



Pipes and pipe cleaning products at a Groton convenience store.

Identifying drug paraphernalia can be challenging because products often are marketed as though they were designed for legitimate purposes. Marijuana pipes and bongs, for example, frequently carry a misleading disclaimer indicating that they are intended to be used only with tobacco products. Do you know many people who smoke tobacco out of a pipe?

Recognizing drug paraphernalia often involves considering other factors such as the manner in which items are displayed for sale, descriptive materials or instructions accompanying the items, and the type of business selling the items.

Drug paraphernalia are often marketed specifically to youth with bright colors, pretty designs, and animal-shaped items, and are meant to look harmless. Community members and parents need to be aware that these kinds of products can also conceal drug use.

Are drug paraphernalia illegal?

Yes. The Federal Drug Paraphernalia Statute, U. S. Code Title 21 Section 863, says it “unlawful for any person to sell or offer for sale drug paraphernalia; to use the mail or any other facility of interstate commerce to transport drug paraphernalia; or to import or export drug paraphernalia.” The law gives specific guidance on determining what constitutes drug paraphernalia. Many states have also enacted their own laws prohibiting drug paraphernalia.

On right: Glass pipes found next to the candy section in a Groton convenience store.



Buying drug paraphernalia should not be a convenience.

Support banning sales of drug paraphernalia in convenience stores.

The 2010 Groton Youth Survey revealed that the perception of harm in regards to *marijuana* is alarmingly low. While we are proud to say that teens recognize that tobacco use and drunk driving are harmful, one area we need to address is marijuana. As a community we need to set an example and say, “drug paraphernalia doesn’t belong in our convenience stores.” Selling marijuana adjacent to milk and candy normalizes its use. Marijuana is six times more potent than it used to be and is a health hazard.

A Drug Paraphernalia Ordinance sends a clear message that we, Groton citizens, value our neighborhoods, law enforcement, youth and our recovery community.

The GASP Coalition’s mission is to build a healthy, safe and drug-free community by advocating for programs, policy changes and practices that increase protective factors and decrease risk factors.

www.gaspcoalition.org

